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San Antonio Express-News

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INAUGURATION DAY

Immigration a top job for Biden

1.7M Texans may see path to citizenship under plan

By Benjamin Wermund
WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON – Just after being sworn in today, President-elect Joe Biden plans to propose a major immigration overhaul that would offer a pathway to citizenship for up to 1.7 million Texans who are in the country without legal authorization.

The proposal, which Biden is expected to immediately send to Congress, would create an eight-year path to citizenship for the estimated 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S., more than 500,000 of whom live in Bexar and Harris counties, according to the Migration Policy Institute.

Those who qualify would be granted green cards after five years and could apply for citizenship three years later.

The plan would create a faster track for those protected by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program – more than 106,000 Texans as of June – and with temporary protected status, who could apply immediately for green cards.

A Biden transition official Tuesday confirmed the outline of the plan, which first was reported by the Washington Post.

The move positions immigration reform as a top priority for the new president, beyond tackling the coronavirus, for which Biden has proposed a $1.9 trillion relief package.

Democrats' slim control of Congress, meanwhile, puts a spotlight on Texas Republicans, especially Sen. John Cornyn, who campaigned last year on his support for the DACA program.

Democrats control the House, where a majority could pass Biden's proposal, but they will need to build support from at least 10 Republican senators for it to get to Biden's desk.

Immigration advocates have

Path continues on A11

Joe Raedle / Getty Images

The Capitol is prepared for the inauguration ceremonies for Joe Biden, with a "Field of Flags" placed on the ground.

More inside

» *S.A. man charged in Capitol rioting appears in court.* **A3**

» *Two suspects in D.C. insurrection are freed on bail in Houston.* **A4**

» *12 Guard members removed in D.C. over security concerns.* **A6**

» *Biden arrives in the nation's capital for the inauguration ceremony.* **A8**

» *Nominees vow fresh approach on security.* **A11**

McConnell pins blame on Trump for stoking the anger of insurrectionists at the Capitol

By Nicholas Fandos
NEW YORK TIMES

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said Tuesday the mob that stormed the Capitol had been "provoked by the president and other powerful people."

It was the first time McConnell stated publicly that he holds President Donald Trump at least partly responsible for the Jan. 6 assault.

"The mob was fed lies," McConnell said, referring to attempts by Trump to overturn the election based on bogus claims of voter fraud. "They were provoked by the president and other powerful people. And they tried to use fear and violence to stop a specific proceeding of the first branch of the federal government, which they did not like."

McConnell made the remarks on his last full day as majority leader, speaking on the eve of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration and as the Senate was bracing to receive a single article of impeachment from the House charging Trump with "incitement of insurrection."

The Kentucky Republican has indicated privately that he believes Trump committed impeachable offenses, but he has said he has yet to decide whether to vote to convict the president.

Many senators in his party are awaiting a sign from McConnell before making their own judgments. It would take 17 Republicans joining all 50 Democrats to find the president guilty, which would allow the Senate to hold a second vote to disqualify Trump from public office in the future.

McConnell's remarks came hours before he was set to meet face to face with his Democratic counterpart, Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York, to work out a set of rules for the trial and the coming Senate session, when the chamber will be split 50-50 between the parties.

Democrats will hold control because Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will have the power to break Senate ties, but Schumer

McConnell continues on A11

MIGUEL ACOSTA JR., *1939-2021*

A noteworthy ability to repair guitars

By Hector Saldaña
CORRESPONDENT

Miguel Acosta Jr. forged his own identity in a legendary San Antonio family of luthiers, craftsmen who make stringed instruments. He was the go-to guy when a guitar needed fixing.

The renowned guitar and instrument repairman, who had been in declining health, died at home Jan. 5 after a brief illness. He was 81.

Acosta ran the family business, Acosta Music Co. on Bandera Road, until his retirement a few years ago. His customers ranged from superstar George Strait to actor Ann B. Davis of "The Brady Bunch" fame and included members of Van Halen and Texas Tornados.

Miguel Acosta Jr., pictured at Acosta Music Co. in 2011, shows off a double-neck bajo sexto guitar built by his father.

Staff file photo

"He made me feel like family," said Jenn Alva, the bass player in Girl in a Coma and Fea, who posted a tribute on Facebook about how Acosta kept her instruments roadworthy. "He always took care of me."

Most people knew Acosta as Mike, and to his family and closest friends he was Mickey. He liked it that way.

In the San Antonio music community, the Acostas were re-

Acosta continues on A9

Military crashes tied to a lack of flying time

By Sig Christenson
STAFF WRITER

The end of another touch-and-go practice landing became anything but routine after a brief, loud noise filled the cockpit of the T-38C flown by Capts. John F. Graziano and Mark S. Palyok.

"What's that?" one of the pilots asked.

A compressor stall and loss of engine thrust left Graziano with seconds to react as he took control of the Talon, the Air Force's mainstay supersonic training jet.

A probe into the Nov. 13, 2018, crash that killed Graziano, 28, of Elkridge, Md., found he mishandled throttle and flight control inputs as the jet lost power on takeoff.

A recent report from a commission studying accidents like that one at Laughlin AFB in Del Rio found pervasive problems in military aviation.

Pilots didn't fly enough, so proficiency waned. Crews made do with inadequate training and were slammed with administrative duties while struggling to get funding.

They endured risky maintenance practices and a crushing operations tempo, a term that refers to the pace of troops training, deploying and returning home to repeat the cycle.

Observers said reversing those trends boils down to four fixes: Slowing that pace, getting pilots into the air more often, giving

Flying continues on A10

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